

# Teaching Portfolio

Alex LeBrun

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## 1 TEACHING STATEMENT

In Winter 2021, I was the primary instructor for a Biomedical Ethics course. As the Covid-19 vaccine became increasingly polarized and falsehoods spread about its efficacy, I taught a module on medical misinformation. Students compared theories about how misinformation is spread through online echo chambers and epistemic bubbles, and then wrote papers on how to combat these harmful phenomena. Many students wrote about how the injection of correct medical information in wellness groups on Facebook will likely be met with skepticism and an entrenchment of the group's misinformed views. This both taught students the philosophical skills to approach contemporary moral problems and showed them how to use these skills to think about real life.

My teaching style is focused on fostering a learning environment where students are excited to discuss philosophy. As an instructor, I must do many things for this environment to be possible. First, and perhaps most importantly, I display an enthusiasm for the course material and for teaching. This is not difficult for me, since I am genuinely enthusiastic about sharing the philosophical theories and arguments that I found so transformative in my own intellectual development. Second, I give students structured and directed opportunities for discussion. I will present an argument or theory, and then we will do group activities that require students to apply their understanding. Students must justify their answers to each other, which encourages working through the issues with peers. Third, I am clear with my students about how they will be assessed in the course by providing lesson plans on writing and having in-class activities that are directly relevant for their papers. Finally, I show students that philosophy is relevant to their lives, as with my Biomedical Ethics Course.

In addition to Biomedical Ethics, which I have taught twice, I have also been the primary instructor for three Introduction to Ethics courses and one upper-division Theory of Knowledge course. My highest enrollment was 268 students, and the lowest was 26 students.

My student evaluation scores and written evaluations have been consistently strong. The quantitative evaluations are always above the department averages and campus averages. Written evaluations emphasize the relevance of course materials. I have included a full set of teaching evaluations from my biomedical ethics course below. Among those evaluations is the following assessment of the strongest part of the course: "LeBrun's implementation of relevant (and I don't know how to stress relevant enough) course material and essay prompts engaged students with course content to a degree I haven't seen before." The comments found on my [ratemyprofessors.com](https://www.ratemyprofessors.com) profile are representative of the written comments I receive on campus reviews. I should note that while I have a good Overall Quality Rating on RateMyProfessors, the Difficulty Level for my courses is a 3.5/5, which is quite high for philosophy.

In addition to my normal teaching duties, I was the coach for UCSB's Ethics Bowl team for four years. Ethics Bowl is a debate-style structured competition where teams present stances on contemporary applied ethical issues. During my tenure as coach,

UCSB's team won first place in the regional competition twice, and won fourth place one time. Each of those three years earned the team a bid at the National Ethics Bowl Championship. My coaching style is to lead from behind, allowing students to work through the ethical issue themselves, rather than trying to convince them of what I believe the strongest stance to be. I intervene in discussions only to warn students of potential objections, to reiterate contributions made by students, and to help with precise wording of principles and stances. Sometimes, Ethics Bowl discussions can be dominated by voices of those who are historically over-represented in philosophy. As the coach, it was my duty to ensure that other voices were heard. Any time I suspected that a student's contribution was not considered, I would stop the discussion and restate the contribution, attributing it to them. Two of my Ethics Bowl students are now enrolled in PhD programs in philosophy and one, who is currently a Summer Research Assistant at the Harvard Law Review, will be applying to law schools.

UC Santa Barbara is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution and an Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution by the US Department of Education. UCSB also enrolls significantly more women than men. Consequently, my classrooms have been occupied by individuals who do not reflect, in gender or race, the standard analytic philosophy canon. I make a conscious effort to foster inclusivity within my classrooms. I noticed that this allows me to create connections with students who are not outspoken in class. At the end of a lecture, I typically have multiple students walk up to me and ask me questions that they may not be comfortable asking in a crowd. Often, these are students for whom English is not their first language. I also make a conscious effort to encourage students to pursue philosophy when they display the virtues of careful reasoning and understanding. I have had several students from underrepresented groups reach out and inform me that they have changed their major to philosophy after taking my classes. They had previously thought that philosophy only concerned itself with combative reasoning.

Some classes I was the sole instructor for were entirely remote due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For such classes, I uploaded asynchronous lectures (together with weekly reflection assignments to ensure students watched the lectures) because many students were in their home countries with different time zones. In my experience, both students and instructors reported less engagement with course material and less progress toward learning outcomes. Students in my asynchronous courses overwhelmingly enjoyed the remote lectures. In one student's words: "Even though it was remote instruction, LeBrun made the videos very engaging and kept my attention, which is hard during these times. The upbeat intro and the professor's enthusiasm were definitely the most valuable aspects of the course." It seems unlikely that universities will return to remote learning in the near future. But it is likely that there will be challenges for teaching in the future, including the advancements of AI text programs like GPT-3. Just like with remote learning, I will make sure to adjust my teaching to the new challenges in a way that keeps students engaged and learning.

## 2 TEACHING EXPERIENCE

I have been primary instructor for Epistemology, Introduction to Ethics, and Biomedical Ethics. I have been teaching assistant for Intermediate Symbolic Logic, Introduction to Philosophy, Introduction to Ethics, and Critical Thinking. I am prepared to teach courses in ethics, biomedical ethics, beginner and intermediate logic, philosophy of science, metaphysics, philosophy of language, philosophy of mathematics, and history of analytic philosophy.

### 2.1 *PHIL 100B: Theory of Knowledge*

I have been the primary instructor for Theory of Knowledge in Summer 2022, with 50 enrolled students. This course is an upper-division epistemology course that requires students to have taken a prior philosophy course. The aim of the course was to provide students with the requisite philosophical tools to succeed in undergraduate seminar courses.

### 2.2 *PHIL 4: Introduction to Ethics*

I have been the primary instructor for Introduction to Ethics in Summer 2019, Fall 2020, and Summer 2021. With up to 300 enrolled students, this course is an introductory-level course that contains mostly non-majors. Two instances were entirely online. I have been teaching assistant for PHIL 4 twice as well, in Summer 2018 and Winter 2019. In those classes, I led two weekly discussion sections, held office hours, and graded all assessments.

### 2.3 *PHIL 7: Biomedical Ethics*

I have been the primary instructor for Biomedical Ethics in Summer 2020 and Winter 2021. PHIL 7 is an introductory-level course that is comprised primarily of philosophy majors and pre-biology major students. Both times I taught it were related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Both instances were entirely online.

### 2.4 *PHIL 183: Beginning Modern Logic*

I have been a teaching assistant for Beginning Modern Logic in Spring 2021. This course provides students with an introduction to first-order logic, up to validity and invalidity for monadic predicate logic. I led weekly discussion sections and graded exams.

### 2.5 *PHIL 1: Introduction to Philosophy*

I have been a teaching assistant for Daniel Korman's Introduction to Philosophy course in Fall 2018. Korman's PHIL 1 course surveys a series of philosophical arguments in all major fields of philosophy: ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology. In this course, I led two weekly discussion sections, held office hours, and graded all assessments.

## 2.6 *PHIL 3: Critical Thinking*

I have been a teaching assistant for Daniel Story's Critical Thinking course in Spring 2019. In this 300 person course, the 90 students in my sections scored, on average, one standard deviation higher on exams than the other sections in class. I crafted weekly assignments to help students master the fundamentals of critical thinking. In this course, I led three weekly discussion sections, held office hours, and graded all assessments.

### 3 TEACHING EVALUATIONS

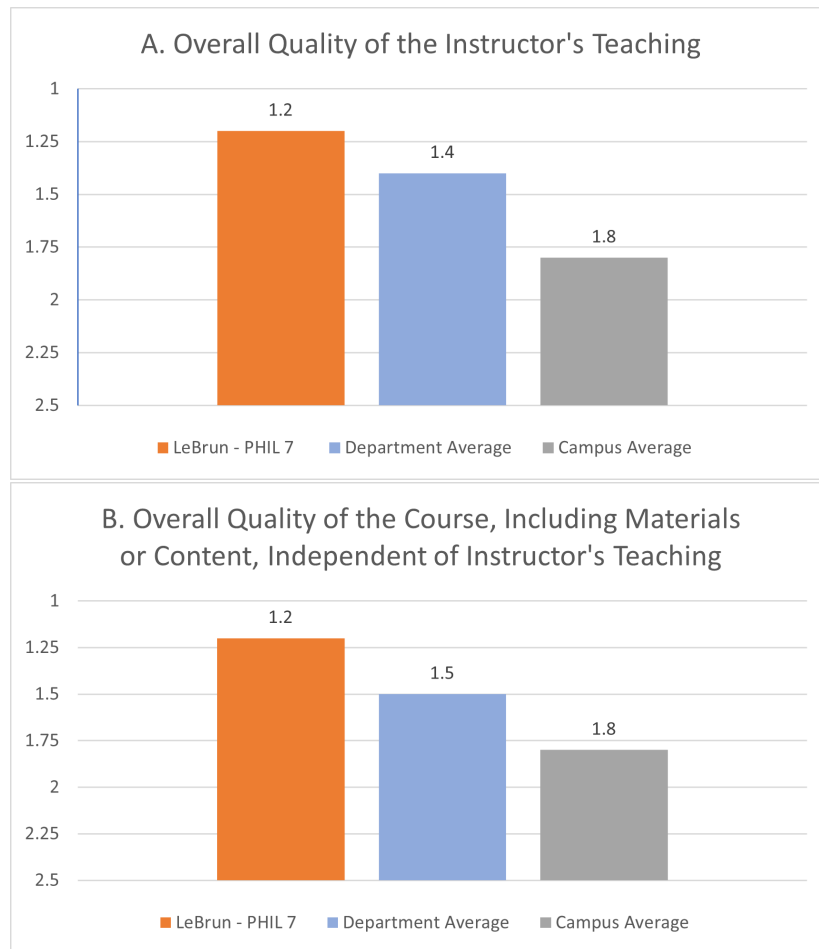
I include below a full set of teaching evaluations (both quantitative and qualitative evaluations) from PHIL 7: Biomedical Ethics, where I was sole instructor in Winter Quarter 2021. These are the most recent evaluations I have, and they are representative samples. PHIL 7 had 117 students, of which 61 completed the survey.

#### 3.1 Quantitative Evaluations

What follows are charts of student evaluations (captured in ESCI surveys). Students rate the instructor according to the following scale:

- 1 = Excellent
- 2 = Very Good
- 3 = Good
- 4 = Fair
- 5 = Poor

Please note that **1 is the highest possible score.**



### 3.2 *Written Evaluations*

Here is the full set of written comments from same PHIL 7 course. Students were asked for responses on two prompts. (1) Please indicate what you consider to be the most valuable aspects of the course, and (2) How could the course be improved? (e.g. additional detail about topics, modifications to instructional materials, different teaching strategies, etc.).

Prompt 1: Please indicate what you consider to be the most valuable aspects of the course.

- I think the greatest takeaway from this course is its ability to reorient the way students think about contentious issues, our everyday interactions with others, etc. Professor Lebrun's implementation of relevant (and I don't know how to stress relevant enough) course material and essay prompts, engaged students with course content to a degree I haven't seen before: for example, our prompts asked us to engage with misinformation in a world wrought with misinformation, in addition to Covid-19 vaccination, distribution, and (justified) racial minority hesitancy amidst a global pandemic.
- Alex really took us through the process of learning how to understand, and write philosophy. The structure of the course was really well done, and I felt prepared for all assignments.
- The lectures and weekly discussions have been the most enjoyable parts of the course for me. These two aspects have really helped me grasp and understand the material.
- he is good at explaining
- The theme songs every week. Honestly, Alex was by far the best remote lecturer I have had in the last year. He manages to be more engaging than my professors with live lectures, despite not actually being able to engage with his students.
- The weekly lectures and reflection assignments
- I liked the projects and how they asked us to analyze the material in a creative way. I also found the coursework very relevant and helpful in dealing with the problems we face as students today. I enjoyed Alex's teaching style which was very enthusiastic and engaging despite the asynchronous format.
- The professor was clearly passionate about the course which made learning more interesting.
- This course brought up interesting ethical topics and applied them to medical issues
- Learning how to read and write philosophy; applying learned concepts to real-life examples

- I thoroughly enjoyed the lectures as it was not only interesting information (at least for me) but the Alex was very engaging despite being pre-recorded lectures. He was able to explain each topic thoroughly while keeping the lectures concise and short. Overall the course was very nice and will probably go down as one of my favorite classes I have taken at UCSB.
- Professor Lebrun's lectures are by far the most valuable aspects of this course. He makes the material fun and engaging, yet still very clear to follow.
- your lecture videos and availability for OH! at the beginning I was upset we didn't discuss a lot of issues that go under the umbrella of biomedical ethics – and THEN after writing the papers I truly appreciated why you did that. The critical thinking aspect of this course really set in after that
- He provided lecture slides so students can follow along and/or refer back to them when doing homework or writing papers. His video lectures were fun and engaging, yet very informative. I enjoyed the structure to his class which helped navigate time management and staying organized. I always knew what to expect for the week, and really appreciated this transparency.
- Alex really emphasized critical thinking and the makings of a good argument. These skills are ubiquitous and helpful for all students of any major.
- Every lecture provided very good information and was thoroughly explained with examples or other resources. Even though it was remote instruction, Professor Lebrun made the videos very engaging and kept my attention, which is hard during these times. The upbeat intro and the professor's enthusiasm were definitely the most valuable aspects of the course. He was very helpful in office hours and I was never afraid to ask questions.
- Great lectures.
- I love how the professor offers different kinds of prompts for the papers, as it allows me to tackle each topic in a diversity of ways. It's also nice how he connects these philosophical topics to current real world situations; this provides a lot of perspective for someone like me who struggles to understand the deeper pandemic issues. Lectures are a tad long but justifiable as the topics can be hard to discuss and teach. Nevertheless, the professor synthesizes our complex readings and keeps us engaged in the core ideas of the material.
- The lectures and the help Alex gives us for our papers. I also enjoy the relevancy of the material.
- The peer review of the first paper stood out as the most helpful. My temptation is to say that the lectures were most valuable, but after learning in this class about people over valuing lectures compared to activities...



- interesting topics that promote thought as well as writing practice and instructions which were helpful
- The most valuable aspects of the course were definitely learning how to write and present arguments better.
- Most valuable aspect of this course is gaining an understanding about major current issues while applying the material learned to them.
- The most valuable aspects of this course was the pre-recorded lectures and all the concepts and ideas presented in it. Alex was very entertaining but also very challenging and discussed concepts in a very clear way. It was so helpful to get tips from him and use them especially like in the readings. I was still confused but by following a couple of his tips I atleast got the jist of it and then I could go and watch lecture and understand the reading completely
- I took this class out of suggestion by my brother who took this class at UC Davis. I am so grateful I took his suggestion. This has to be one of my favorite classes I've taken at UCSB so far. It has offered me new perspectives, knowledge, helped me combat my undiscovered ignorance, and helped me think of the world in a new way. It has given me an outlet to make sense of my thoughts, morals, and views. I took this course in conjunction with auditing INT 75 - Underserved Medicine. The themes matched so perfectly it as almost as if it was planned. I genuinely appreciate the insight this class has allowed me to gain and will take that moving forward with whatever career I decide to pursue. I appreciate that it has allowed me to workout my thinking muscle, my brain, in an educational way that has encouraged my love for learning.
- I really like the fact that that he gave us really interesting readings for the course. I love how passionate he was about the material and the emails he sent out relating to what we were learning or going to learn. I like the energy he put into the lecture videos.
- I found it valuable that the professor engaged with his students with a fun, interactive pre-recorded lecture! They were enjoyable to view and didn't feel like a hard task to do although there was plenty to learn. I liked that the professor kept up with his students and gave more modern perspectives of philosophy.
- I loved how enthusiastic alex was when teaching this course. It made up for the lack of in person classes.
- The carefully thought out lesson plans and that all reading pertain to what we are learning and help to deepen our understanding. Very good and manageable amount of work. I also really liked the weekly assignments to strengthen our understanding of the subject matter.

- The most valuable aspects of the course was looking at philosophy in a different way. I took a previous philosophy course in the past that was more technical. The way the course was structured was fairly efficient.
- Alex is great at presenting complex philosophical concepts in an easily understandable and approachable manner. This course has definitely strengthened my philosophical writing skills and helped me feel more comfortable in writing a philosophy paper.
- I loved how it tied in current events and made concepts applicable to today's news
- learning to write philosophy
- I liked the examples and discussion driven lectures!
- Not only is the material interesting, Alex Lebrun is a wonderful lecturer and brings joy to every lecture even in tough times. The visuals and videos are very helpful, along with Lebrun's additional commentary.
- The most valuable aspect of the course is the lectures that go over not just class content but how to lay out upcoming topic projects. They were really helpful in guiding me in the right direction.
- The topics were made so interesting which I think made it easier to learn. Also, we were taught how to write essays which is the first time I've had that experience at UCSB. Usually we are expected to know how to write for any type of class but Alex made it so we gained a lot of writing skills.
- Alex's lectures were extremely interesting and engaging. He was incorporates a but of humor into his lectures to make them enjoyable for the students. Provides a clear guideline as to how to do well in the course. His intro video that he puts at the beginning of all his lectures is also very funny :) Thank you, Alex!
- Flexible TAs
- The way Alex teaches is definitely the most valuable aspect of the course. The material itself is very interesting on its own, but Alex teaches it in a way that makes you want to be engaged and learn more. I also liked how the course focused more on relating the topics we learned to current events.
- Lectures efficiently explaining philosophical theories
- I really enjoyed the format of the lecture videos
- I think learning how to write a philosophy paper has been extremely helpful and just considering ethical dilemmas in the medicine because I am interested in going into the medical field.

- Professor was very interactive and engaging in his lectures; each one was amazing.

Prompt 2: How could the course be improved? (e.g. additional detail about topics, modifications to instructional materials, different teaching strategies, etc.).

- I don't have any improvements really. It would be kind of nice if the topic essays happen at the end of each topic instead of a week into the next one, but I understand this just has to do with how quickly the quarter system goes by.
- N/A, great class
- I think the class moved very quickly at the end in a way that was a bit overwhelming. It was hard to keep up with current material while completing a project from the last sections so I found myself falling behind or missing weekly assignments. Maybe remove weekly assignments for those weeks so that we don't have to write an essay, watch lecture, do readings, and write the weekly assignment all at once.
- I think more time could've been spent on the latter topics. 5 weeks on libertarian paternalism was more than enough, but only having about 2 weeks on the disability topic felt a bit rushed.
- I understand that we needed to get the basics down before being able to write our papers, but having a paper due every other week for the last five weeks of class was a little bit stressful and overwhelming. If there is a better way to space out the papers that would be helpful.
- I enjoyed the way the class was organized and the structure, so there are no complaints about how it could be improved.
- This course is already the best it could be- I only wish I could take it again and again and keep learning more!
- N/A - but maybe do speak more on past cases and their reasoning on why something is ethically right or wrong in the biomedical field
- None, he is a wonderful asset to UCSB!
- Alex always brought amazing energy to the classroom, which is so important for virtual learning. However, I felt that we spent a little too much time discussing political issues (i.e. QAnon, Trump, Rush L.) before tying back to biomedical ethics. Although the issues discussed effectively conveyed the professors point, I wish we would have used biomedical examples instead or not spent so much time talking about politics.

- The course is already amazing and it made learning fun. It was one of the few classes I actually looked forward to, even in video format. I wish we could have had it in person. Good teaching strategies and great teacher!
- The beginning of the quarter had a strong start, but I feel like the pacing wavered near the middle of the week. We spent around 5 weeks on the first topic and rushed through the last three in that same span of time. This made it harder to comprehend the material (disability was the most complex of all four) and fully realize some material (we skimmed over the last topic fairly quickly). In short, the two week organization of each topic is a neat idea, but the execution was poor in terms of pacing. Feedback is minimal - which is understandable considering the workload of the TA's - but I was left with zero ideas on how to improve my next paper. The variety of prompts is an awesome factor, but there are some drawbacks as well. The fact that there is a large variety of prompts can sometimes be overwhelming (which is ironic, because we learned about cognitive biases!) so I think it should be simplified somewhat. I can't help but feel that it also overwhelms the TA, considering that they have to judge so many prompts in so little time. Maybe if the prompts were reduced to just one, the TA's wouldn't have to be so concerned with grading? Then as a result, this would allow them to have more leeway for providing feedback to students. I may be wrong on this aspect, but it's just a thought. In addition, some of the reflection assignments and weekly discussions in section revolve too much around the writing philosophy aspect of the class. It would be better to have the discussion sections be based solely on actual ethical topics that can be discussed, rather than having us state what we plan to do for the next paper.
- I'd love to have live sessions with Alex because I feel like he'd be an even better professor in real time.
- The weekly responses seemed not that helpful, and writing few longer papers (perhaps even more than the 700-900 words of the current longer papers) seems like it would give more practice fully developing arguments.]
- I don't know
- Honestly, this has been the best structured course so far at my time at UCSB. I cannot think of any improvements!
- n/a
- For some time he only put lectures out later in the day on Tuesday which kind of suck but then he started putting them out early on like Monday which I think he should keep doing because I like to watch all my lectures in the beginning of the week.

- I would appreciate more insight on how to better improve my writing, especially my essay writing. Perhaps, including one or two writing assignments that aren't a huge portion of the grade and simply there for practice and feedback.
- Personally, i like the format of async but for some it can be hard and can fall behind on material.
- I do not have any additional recommended suggestions. I very much enjoyed this teaching style!
- Nothing could really improve the course
- There were some instances where the professor could contradict himself which could be confusing. The papers are really intriguing; however, feedback from the professor and TA sometimes does not align.
- Although they were few, I did not appreciate Alex's occasional insertion of political comments in lectures that did not seem necessary. Constantly hearing about the distressing news throughout the world in social media, news, and friends makes insertion of politics (even if slight and infrequent) tiresome and distracting from the course material. The intro at the beginning of every lecture was a bit unnecessary; it did not impede learning but it was definitely something that was a slight nuisance as I skipped it every time aside from the first time.
- none
- n/a
- N/A
- The course could be improved by making weekly responses worth more.
- I liked how the class was formatted as is.
- Essays and grading are way too difficult
- I can think of anything that would improve the course.
- Add more realistic bioethical scenarios
- I would have loved synchronous classes, I think that would have been really engaging especially with the material covered in this class.
- I don't have any suggestions, I really enjoyed the course and how it was laid out!
- I genuinely do not think this course could be improved; the dynamics of the surrounding world, as well as Professor Lebrun's influence, enabled a critical engagement that'd be hard to reach without, say, a global pandemic or constant political/social contention.
- N/A

#### 4 SAMPLE SYLLABI

Below you will find two syllabi from introductory courses I have previously taught, and one sample syllabus from an upper-division course I wish to teach. After the first syllabus, you will only find readings and a course description for the other courses.

# PHIL 7: BIOMEDICAL ETHICS

Alex LeBrun

Winter 2021

E-mail: [lebrun@ucsb.edu](mailto:lebrun@ucsb.edu)

Office Hours: Friday 12:00 - 2:00

[Zoom Room](#)

Class Hours: Asynchronous Online

[Class Website](#)

TAs:

Seán Pierce

Section Times

Office Hours

[spierce@ucsb.edu](mailto:spierce@ucsb.edu)

Tuesday 9:00 AM, Tuesday 10:00 AM

Thursday 2:00 - 4:00

Charles Perkins

Section Times

Office Hours

[perkins@ucsb.edu](mailto:perkins@ucsb.edu)

Tuesday 6:00 PM, Tuesday 7:00 PM

Wednesday 10:00 - 12:00

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## COVID-19 Note

All course lectures will be prerecorded videos that are available at the same time each week. Course lectures for the week will be available immediately after section. (For example, the course lectures for the entirety of Week 2 will be uploaded on Tuesday (of week 2) at roughly 7:00 pm PST.) You will have weekly assignments, so you should be watching the lecture videos ASAP. Here's some tips on remote learning: <https://keeplearning.id.ucsb.edu/>

## Course Description

Biomedical Ethics is the inquiry into ethical issues surrounding biology, medicine, and scientific research. It is an applied ethical field, which means that it asks questions about specific cases, rather than broad questions about the nature of morality as such. Traditionally, this meant biomedical ethics investigates topics like abortion, genetic engineering, human rights, animal testing, and patient confidentiality.

Students in this course will develop the skills and vocabulary required to approach contemporary biomedical ethical issues. This will be achieved through a mixture of understanding theory and direct consideration of biomedical case studies. The four topics of the course are paternal-

ism, physical disability, medical misinformation, and race, class, and medicine. The approach to applied ethics in this course will rely on considering the messy details of real scenarios.

## Required Materials

Everything required for this class will be available on Gauchospace.

## Course Structure

### Grading Policy

The class is structured according to, and your grade will be determined by, the following four elements. The percentage of your final grade determined by any item is on the right-hand side of the page.

#### 0.1 Weekly Responses .....20%

Each week, you will have to write a short response piece to a prompt, to be turned in on Gauchospace. The purpose of these weekly responses is to gauge your understanding of asynchronous course lectures.

- Each Weekly Response is due on Sunday at 11:59 pm (no late acceptances).
- Each Weekly Response will have a word limit (usually around 200 or 250 words).
- Weekly Responses will be graded on a three-point scale: 0, 1, or 2.
- There will be 10 Weekly Responses throughout the quarter.
- Your TA will discuss the Weekly Response in section the week after it is due.

#### 0.2 Section .....20%

Attending section is mandatory for all students. Be sure you are aware which section you are required to attend.

Each section will contain an assignment that is due at the end of section. Some of these section assignments may have portions you must complete prior to section. Section will be held over Zoom with your TA. These assignments will not be difficult, but they will require you to be present and ready at each section.

- If you are unable to attend the synchronous sections (e.g., if you are currently in a time zone that does not make it easy to attend a 10:00 am PST section), then you may request accommodations at the beginning of the quarter. These will be in the form of written assignments that will be graded.
- Note: this accommodation is quarter-long. Section will either be mandatory for the entire quarter, or the written assignment will be mandatory for the entire quarter.



**0.3 Topic Projects ..... 60% Total**

The course is divided into four biomedical ethical topics. At the end of each topic, you will have a project assigned. The exact prompt of each topic will change, where each project will build upon the requirements of the last. Some projects will allow you to engage directly with the biomedical ethical issues.

- All topic projects will be written philosophy papers, though you will be asked to respond to different prompts.
- The topic prompts will contain exact word counts; yet they will likely be between 500 and 1000 words each.
- Due dates will be approximately a week after concluding each topic.

**Schedule**

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. Please complete readings prior to watching that day's lecture. These readings are difficult, so take your time, and read, reread, and reread. Note that all three lectures will be uploaded on Tuesday evenings (PST). Try to space out when you watch them, because my voice can get very annoying after long periods of listening.

**Week 1, 01/04 - 01/08:**

W1L1 Syllabus and Introduction

W1L2 Beauchamp and Childress, Chapter 1 of *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*.

W1L3 Beauchamp and Childress, Chapter 1 of *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*.

**Week 2, 01/11 - 01/15:**

Topic 1: Paternalism

W2L1 David W. Concepción, "Reading Philosophy with Background Knowledge and Metacognition."

W2L2 Selections from Sunstein and Thaler, *Nudge*.

W2L3 Selections from Sunstein and Thaler, *Nudge*.

**Week 3, 01/18 - 01/22:**

Topic 1: Paternalism

Holiday

W3L1 Selections from Sunstein and Thaler, *Nudge*.

W3L2 Selections from Conly, *Against Autonomy*.

**Week 4, 01/25 - 01/29:**

Topic 1: Paternalism

W4L1 Selections from Conly, *Against Autonomy*.

W4L2 Selections from Conly, *Against Autonomy*.

W4L3 Philosophical Writing/Topic 1 Project

**Week 5, 02/01 - 02/05:**

Topic 2: Physical Disability

W5L1 McMahon, "Causing Disabled People to Exist and Causing People to be Disabled."

W5L2 McMahon, "Causing Disabled People to Exist and Causing People to be Disabled."

W5L3 Barnes, "Disability, Minority, and Difference"

**Week 6, 02/08 - 02/12:**

Topic 2: Physical Disability

W6L1 Barnes, "Disability, Minority, and Difference"

W6L2 Topic 2 Project

W6L3 Anti-science conspiracies: Qanon

**Week 7, 02/15 - 02/19:**

Topic 3: Misinformation

Holiday

W7L1 Neil Levy, "Due deference to denialism: explaining ordinary people's rejection of established scientific findings."

W7L2 Neil Levy, "Due deference to denialism: explaining ordinary people's rejection of established scientific findings."

**Week 8, 02/22 - 02/26:**

Topic 3: Misinformation

W8L1 C. Thi Nguyen, "Escape the Echo Chamber."

W8L2 C. Thi Nguyen, "Escape the Echo Chamber."

W8L3 Topic 3 Project

**Week 9, 03/01 - 03/05:**

Topic 4: Race, Class, and Medicine

W9L1 Ijeoma Oluo, *So you want to talk about race?*

W9L2 Dayna Bowen Matthew, *Just Medicine: A Cure for Racial Inequality in American Health Care*

W9L3 Dayna Bowen Matthew, *Just Medicine: A Cure for Racial Inequality in American Health Care*

**Week 10, 03/08 - 03/12:**

## Topic 4: Race, Class, and Medicine

W10L1 Dayna Bowen Matthew, *Just Medicine: A Cure for Racial Inequality in American Health Care*

W10L2 Michael Marmot, *The Health Gap: The Challenge of an Unequal World*.

W10L3 Michael Marmot, *The Health Gap: The Challenge of an Unequal World*.

W10L4 Topic 4 Project

## Academic Integrity

According to the UCSB Office of Judicial Affairs:

All members of the UCSB community share the responsibility of upholding academic integrity at the University. Academic dishonesty is a serious act that erodes the University's mission, cheapens the learning experience, and the value of one's degree. It is expected that all UCSB students will support the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be responsible for the integrity of their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts unless otherwise permitted by an instructor.

Per UCSB policy, academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will be prosecuted with due harshness. Ignorance is no excuse. For more information, please ask myself or the course TA, or visit the [UCSB Office of Judicial Affairs website](#). Please approach myself or one of your TAs if you have any questions regarding this.

## Student Resources

### Disabled Students Program (DSP)

Students with disabilities may request academic accommodations for exams online through the UCSB Disabled Students Program at <http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu/>. Please make your requests for exam accommodations through the online system as early in the quarter as possible to ensure arrangement.

### Campus Learning Assistance Services

For general academic support, students are encouraged to visit Campus Learning Assistance Services (CLAS) early and often. CLAS offers instructional groups, drop-in tutoring, writing and ESL services, skills workshops and one-on-one consultations. CLAS is located on the third floor of the Student Resource Building, or visit <http://clas.sa.ucsb.edu>.

### Counseling and Psychological Services

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationships, depression, cultural differences, can interfere with the ability of students to succeed and thrive, especially during a global pandemic. For helpful resources, I highly recommend contacting UCSB Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) at 805-893-4411 or visit <http://counseling.sa.ucsb.edu/>.

# PHIL 4: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

## Course Description

At some point in every person's life, they must decide how morality fits into their actions, lifestyle, and outlook. Many do this uncritically, merely taking the moral dictates of their religion, culture, or family & friends. Others use morality just as a vehicle for their own ends, wheeling out moral claims and reasoning that serve their purposes only when convenient, and forgetting right and wrong at all other times. This class serves to give students a head start at determining for themselves how morality is to be integrated in their own life trajectory. To that end, the course is structured around the three pillars of *Morality, the World, and Me*. The class will use distinctively philosophical methods to answer the question of how morality is related to one's life.

We will focus on topics like the demands of morality, the correct moral theory, the point of a moral theory, whether morality is objective, as well as applied ethical topics like vegetarianism and misogyny. It will broach the three main subdivisions of ethical theory: normative ethics, metaethics, and applied ethics. At the end of the course, students will have gained the skills and confidence necessary to approach real-life ethical dilemmas that they face, as well as the critical thinking ability required to integrate moral reasoning in everyday life.

## Schedule

### Week 1

Thurs. Syllabus

### Week 2

Tues. Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints." *Optional Reading*: J.O. Urmson, "Saints and Heroes"

Wed. David W. Concepción, "Reading Philosophy with Background Knowledge and Metacognition."

Thurs. Selections on the puzzle of supererogation

### Week 3

Tues. Selections on the all-or-nothing problem for supererogation

Wed. Russ Shafer-Landau, "Consequentialism: Its Nature and Attractions," from *Fundamentals of Ethics*.

Thurs. Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality."

**Week 4**

**Paper 1 Due End Week 4**

Tues. Peter Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality"

Wed. Bernard Williams, "Consequentialism and Integrity" selections.

Thurs. Immanuel Kant, *The Groundwork*, Section 1

**Week 5**

Tues. Selections from Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*

Wed. Steven Pinker, "Arcs of Coherence" from *The Sense of Style*.

Thurs. Immanuel Kant, *The Groundwork*, Section 2

**Week 6**

Tues. Simon Blackburn, *Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* selections

Wed. T.M. Scanlon, *What we owe to each other* selections

Thurs. Moral realism selections.

**Week 7**

Tues. J.L. Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* selections.

Wed. Memorial Day. No lecture.

Thurs. James Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism."

**Week 8**

**Paper 2 Due End Week 8**

Tues. Allan Gibbard, "How Much Realism?" Part 1.

Wed. Allan Gibbard, "How Much Realism?" Part 2.

Thurs. Allan Gibbard, "How Much Realism." Part 3.

**Week 9**

Tues. Allan Gibbard, "How Much Realism." Part 4.

Wed. Thanksgiving. No lecture.

Thurs. Thanksgiving. No lecture.

**Week 10**

Tues. Alistair Norcross, "Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases."

Wed. Alistair Norcross, "Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases."

Thurs. Kate Manne, *Down Girl* selections.

**Week 11**

**Final Paper Due**

Tues. Kate Manne, *Entitled* selections.

Wed. Jim Pryor, "Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper"

Thurs. Writing philosophy selections.

# UPPER DIVISION: LANGUAGE AND POWER

## Course Description

Traditional theories and arguments in philosophy of language imagine conversation as a deliberative process where peers seek out the way the world is: inquiry. Such a project has generated sophisticated models for understanding how language works. As has become clear in recent decades, though, much of language is devoted to dehumanizing others, moralizing, and making the world in one's image. These *uses* of language outside inquiry often resist traditional explanations, or at least seem to resist traditional explanations. This class will survey historical and contemporary approaches to the non-standard ways that language is used to reinforce social positions and denigrate others.

Students will learn essential content in traditional semantic and pragmatic approaches in philosophy of language, as well as learn different theories on the following linguistic phenomena: moral (and other normative) speech, slurs, political dogwhistles, silencing, and other non-cooperative communication. Students will gain the skills necessary to recognize, approach, and understand such uses of language in common life. Students will demonstrate their ability to critically engage with contemporary accounts of philosophy of language.

## Readings

### Module 1: Classical Semantics

Frege, "Function and Concept"

Frege, "Sense and Reference"

Strawson, "On Referring"

### Module 2: Classical Pragmatics

Grice, "Logic and Conversation"

Stalnaker, "Assertion"

### Module 3: Slurs

Hornsby, "Meaning and Uselessness: How to Think about Derogatory Words"

Potts, "The Expressive Dimension."

Bolinger, "The Pragmatics of Slurs."

Manne, selections from *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*.

**Module 4: Moralizing Speech**

Camp, "Metaethical Expressivism"

Hay, "Hybrid Expressivism and the Analogy between Pejoratives and Moral Language"

Tosi and Warmke, selections from *Grandstanding: The Use and Abuse of Moral Talk*.

**Module 5: Subtle Power Moves**

Saul, "Dogwhistles, Political Manipulation, and Philosophy of Language"

Camp, "Insinuation, Common Ground, and the Conversational Record."

**Module 6: Silencing**

Tanesini, "Silencing and assertion."

McDonald, "Your Word Against Mine: The Power of Uptake."